



**Natural Heritage
& Endangered Species
Program**

www.mass.gov/nhesp

Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife

**Canada Warbler
*Cardellina canadensis***

State Status: **None**
Federal Status: **None**

SPECIES DESCRIPTION: The Canada Warbler is a brightly-colored migratory wood-warbler 5-6 inches long. Male and female plumages are similar, but the female is duller overall. The upperparts are bluish gray; underparts are bright yellow. The yellow and gray portions of the head are separated by black. The black area extends beneath the eye along the side of the throat to meet a series of vertical rows of black spots that form a “necklace” across the upper breast. The undertail coverts are white. Juvenile males are similar to adults, but duller, and the juvenile female is duller of all, although adult markings are still recognizable.

DISTRIBUTION AND ABUNDANCE: The Canada Warbler is a fairly common breeder from the Connecticut River Valley west and in northwestern Worcester County. It is uncommon in eastern Massachusetts, and completely absent from Cape Cod and the Islands (Petersen and Meservey 2003). The Massachusetts population is believed to be in decline based on data from the North American Breeding Bird Survey (Sauer et al. 2004).

HABITAT DESCRIPTION: Canada Warblers occupy moist or swampy hardwood and mixed hardwood/conifer forests with dense undergrowth, (Veit and Petersen 1993). Their diet consists of insects and spiders which are captured by hawking, hovering, and gleaning low in the understory (Conway 1999). Nests are well-concealed in dense vegetation and are constructed on or near the ground, such as within the roots of an upturned tree or on top of a mossy log (Conway 1999).

THREATS: Habitat fragmentation appears to be the primary threat to this species, which is considered highly area-sensitive (Conway 1999). Active forest management can be compatible with sustaining Canada Warbler populations. Generally, management practices which increase understory vegetation density (such as reducing deer density) enhance Canada Warbler habitat, while practices which decrease understory density detract from their habitat (Conway 1999).

REFERENCES:

- Conway, C.J. 1999. Canada Warbler (*Wilsonia canadensis*). In: *The Birds of North America*, No. 421 (A. Poole and F. Gill, eds.). The Birds of North America, Inc., Philadelphia, PA.
- Petersen, W.R., and W.R. Meservey. 2003. *Massachusetts Breeding Bird Atlas*. Massachusetts Audubon Society and University of Massachusetts Press, Amherst, Massachusetts.
- Sauer, J.R., J.E. Hines, and J. Fallon. 2004. *The North American Breeding Bird Survey, Results and Analysis 1966 - 2003. Version 2004.1. USGS Patuxent Wildlife Research Center, Laurel, Maryland.*
- Veit, R., and W.R. Petersen. 1993. *Birds of Massachusetts*. Massachusetts Audubon Society, Lincoln, Massachusetts.

Updated 2015

A Species of Greatest Conservation Need in the Massachusetts State Wildlife Action Plan

Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife

1 Rabbit Hill Rd., Westborough, MA; tel: 508-389-6300; fax: 508-389-7890; www.mass.gov/dfw

Please allow the Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program to continue to conserve the biodiversity of Massachusetts with a contribution for ‘endangered wildlife conservation’ on your state income tax form, as these donations comprise a significant portion of our operating budget.

www.mass.gov/nhesp